

# Emergency Responder

WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

July-August 2001

## August wildfires set record

The 2001 fire season blew up into a record eight State Fire Resources Mobilization Plan declarations in the week of Aug. 12, triggered mainly by widespread lightning strikes on the dry forest and rangelands of Eastern Washington.

By Aug. 23, the Eastern Washington firefight involved nearly 250 firefighters from the state fire resources mobilization plan, state and federal wildland firefighters, the Washington National Guard, and U.S. Army troops from Ft. Lewis. Fire acreage topped 150,000 – mostly in north central and northeastern Washington.

Gov. Gary Locke proclaimed a state of emergency in four counties in order to muster all available state agency support for the firefighting effort that many compared to the disastrous 1994 fire season. Fire managers, however, did receive unexpected help from an unusually active summer storm system that brought measurable rain to all fire areas between Aug. 21 and 23. Personnel assigned to the fires topped the 6,000 mark by Aug. 22.

Six of the fires received Federal Emergency Management Agency approval for federal fire suppression assistance.

The following is a summary of fire activity as of Aug. 30:

### Virginia Lakes Complex, Okanogan County

Fires in this complex destroyed nine structures and burned more than 73,000 acres of timber and grassland. About 100 homes and the historic St. Mary's Mission were threatened. Washington National Guard helicopters and U.S. Army soldiers joined with fire districts as well as state and



Carlson family members attending the dedication of the memorial to the late Ed Carlson, former EMD chief of staff, were (l-r) his widow, Nancy; son, Eric; granddaughter, Amanda; daughter, Amy; granddaughter, Emily; daughter-in-law, Laura; and grandsons, Reese and Chad. (EMD photo by Rob Harper)

## EMD dedicates memorial to former chief of staff Carlson

The Emergency Management Division (EMD) on July 26 officially dedicated a memorial on the division's headquarters grounds to honor former chief of staff Ed Carlson.

Carlson, who died of cancer in August 1999, played a key role in the construction and setup of the EMD's new headquarters at Camp Murray. A retired U.S. Army colonel, Carlson had been a prisoner of war in Vietnam and earned a Silver Star. He also served as the Army's support for civil authorities in the response to the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and was an active duty advisor to the Washington Army National Guard.

EMD's memorial to Carlson includes a bronze plaque on a granite rock and tree and flower plantings that honor his dedication, service and commitment to the agency and its employees.

Speakers at the dedication were Brig. Gen. Lee Legowik, commander of the Washington Army National Guard; Maj. Gen. Frank Scoggins, commander of the Washington Air National Guard; and Glen Woodbury, EMD director.

## Counties receive award

Pierce and King counties' "Port to Port" study will receive an achievement award from the National Association of Counties later this summer. The study, part of the two counties' Project Impact program, concluded that the retrofitting of bridges between the ports of Seattle and Tacoma could be justified because of the projected economic losses resulting from bridge failures following a major earthquake.

*Continued on page 2—*

---

## July fires marked by 30 Mile firefighter fatalities in Okanogan County

After months of fearful anticipation about a severe 2001 fire season, it erupted in a series of north-central Washington fires in mid-July, leaving four firefighters dead and thousands of acres burned.

### **Libby South, Okanogan County**

This series of fires began on the afternoon of July 9 when the Libby South fire, ignited by a malfunctioning state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) vehicle, threatened timberland and structures near Carlton in southern Okanogan County.

An Okanogan County request for aid under the State Fire Resources Mobilization Plan was approved shortly before midnight on July 9. Crews from 21 fire districts were sent to the fire.

Burning in very steep and rough terrain, the fire blackened 3,800 acres before it was contained July 16. No homes or structures were damaged.

### **30 Mile Fire, Okanogan County**

On the afternoon of July 10, firefighters and reporters at the Libby South fire spotted a gigantic smoke plume to the north. It marked the deadly blow up of the 30 Mile Fire about 12 miles north of Winthrop in the Chewuch River drainage near the remote Pasayten Wilderness in west central Okanogan County.

That evening, U.S. Forest Service officials reported that the 30 Mile fire explosion had forced some of its firefighters to deploy into fire shelters and that four firefighters were unaccounted for in the fire area. As the fire erupted from five acres to more than 2,500 acres in less than three hours, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) coordinated a search for the missing firefighters. Near midnight on July 10, officials sadly announced that the four firefighters—all members of eastern Washington USFS crews—had died in the fire blowup. Another four firefighters and two civilians were reported injured.

USFS investigations began of both the circumstances of the fire fatalities and the fire's ignition by an

unattended campfire near the 30 Mile campground.

While the USFS assembled a national incident command team with a force of nearly 1,000 firefighters to battle the 30 Mile Fire, the Okanogan County Sheriff directed a complicated search and rescue operation to contact or verify locations of all known hikers and campers in the vicinity of the fire.

Coordinated with the Forest Service's 30 Mile fire operations, the

air search operated from Omak and featured two helicopters from the Fairchild Air Force Base and single helicopters from Chelan and Snohomish counties.

Chelan County also provided a search coordinator and a portable radio repeater to aid communications in the search area.

"Using back country permits and registrations of parked vehicles at

*Continued next page—*

---

## August wildfires set record

*Continued from page 1*

federal wildland agencies to nearly contain the fire by Aug. 30. Eighty firefighters and 24 engines were dispatched to the complex under the state fire resources mobilization plan.

### **Rex Creek Complex, Chelan County**

Burning in steep terrain along Lake Chelan, the Rex Creek fire threatened 260 homes and forced the evacuation of several lakeside residences. The fire burned more than 48,000 acres and was not expected to be contained until Sept. 7.

### **Spruce-Dome Complex, Yakima County**

The complex of two fires burned more than 2,600 acres in rugged terrain south of Rimrock Lake. Numerous structures and homes were threatened. Heavy rain aided the efforts of more than 1,000 fire-fighters to contain the complex by Aug. 23. Washington National Guard fire personnel supported the effort, and fire districts around the state provided 13 engines and 34 personnel.

### **Icicle Complex, Chelan County**

Consisting of 20 different fires, the complex threatened nearly 2,000 homes and businesses in the Icicle Creek drainage near the town of Leavenworth. A total of 41 engines and 133 personnel from fire districts around the state worked with state and federal wildland fire agencies to contain the fires Aug. 27. A total of more than 7,500 acres burned in the Icicle complex.

### **Tonasket Complex, Okanogan County**

Washington National Guard personnel joined with local, state and federal agencies to battle this complex's four fires that threatened 150 structures. Fifteen engines and 53 firefighters were sent to the fire by the state fire resources mobilization plan.

### **Brewster Complex, Okanogan County**

This fire complex was contained Aug. 21 after burning 6,100 acres and threatening as many as 60 residences. More than 900 firefighters battled fires in the complex, including fire strike teams dispatched through the state fire resources mobilization plan.

### **Mt. Leona Complex, Ferry County**

This fire complex, which was nearly contained as of Aug. 30, had burned nearly 6,000 acres and threatened 30 homes and 50 other structures. State and federal agencies battled the fire along with 23 engines and 60 firefighters dispatched under the state fire resources mobilization plan.

### **Goodnoe Hills, Klickitat County**

Ignited by railroad operations, the fire burned more than 10,000, and threatened crops, 25 homes and other buildings. It was fought by state and local fire agencies with assistance from strike teams sent under the state fire resources mobilization plan. The fire was contained Aug. 19.

## July fires

*Continued from previous page*

trailheads, along with calls from concerned family members, we contacted or verified the locations of 28 of the hikers and campers known to be in the Payasten Wilderness in the vicinity of the 30 Mile Fire,” said Connie Humphrey, Okanogan County emergency coordinator.

“Four campers or hikers were airlifted to Omak, and the others chose to use travel directions to avoid the fire area.”

Aided by cooler temperatures and some rain and snow in the fire area, the USFS declared the 30 Mile Fire contained July 23 after it had burned 9,300 acres.

### **Porcupine Bay, Lincoln County**

A second call for the State Fire Resources Mobilization Plan followed an intense series of eastern Washington thunderstorms during the afternoon and evening of July 12. Lightning strikes ignited a series of fires that threatened as many as 50 homes by late afternoon July 13 about 15 miles north of Davenport in Lincoln County.

Under the county’s mobilization aid approved early on July 14, the State Fire Marshal’s Office directed the dispatch of fire district crews from Grant and Lincoln counties. The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also contributed personnel and equipment. Three hundred ninety-five firefighters battled the Porcupine Bay Fire at its height. The fire covered 448 acres and was contained July 16.

### **Port Kelley, Walla Walla County**

Firefighters took three days to control a railroad-ignited blaze near Port Kelley on the Columbia River in Walla Walla County.

Pushed by winds, the fire quickly spread to more than 5,000 acres and threatened numerous residences and several industrial facilities. The Fire Mobilization Plan declaration was issued at 6:20 p.m., July 28. Local fire



Severe burning conditions such as these on the Sleepy Fire Complex in Ferry County were a major reason why State Emergency Management and the Washington State Patrol’s Office of the Fire Marshal needed to simultaneously manage a record eight state fire plan mobilizations during the week of Aug. 12-19. (U.S. Forest Service photo)

fighters were joined by forces from 46 other fire districts and departments from around the state. The fire was controlled after burning 7,011 acres.

### **Union Valley, Chelan County**

Ignited by illegal trash burning, the Union Valley fire broke out on the afternoon of July 28 about six miles north of the city of Chelan. The fire burned one home and two trailers, forced the evacuation of as many as 32 residences, and threatened

another 70 homes. As many as 930 firefighters, backed by three helicopters and four airtankers, battled the stubborn fire that spread northward into a hilly region of sagebrush, pine trees and dry grass. Federal fire suppression assistance was approved July 29 for the fire, which was contained Aug. 3 after burning 4,600 acres. Under the state fire re-sources mobilization plan, crews were dispatched to the fire from 21 outside fire districts and departments.





Rigorous training for chemical, biological and radiological incidents enabled the Washington National Guard's 10th Civil Support Team (CST) to attain its certification as mission capable Aug. 2 by the U.S. Department of Defense. The 10th CST, consisting of 22 highly skilled, full-time members of the Guard, is prepared to assess a situation, rapidly deploy, advise civil authorities and facilitate requests for additional assistance. Washington currently is only one of three states in the nation with certified civil support teams. (Washington National Guard photo.)

### Awards announced

The Western States Seismic Policy Council has announced that six Washington emergency management and response agencies will receive 2001 Awards in Excellence on Oct. 23 in Sacramento, Calif.

Two of the winners in the Outreach to Schools Category were: Washington State Tsunami Curriculum K-6 & 7-12—Washington State Military Dept., Emergency Management Division, Plans, Exercises, Education & Training Unit; and School Emergency Response Team—Kent Fire Department and Life Safety, Kent, Wash.

In the Outreach to the General Public category, the winner was Project Impact Television of King and Pierce Counties.

In the Innovations category, the winner was Washington Coast NOAA Weather Radio Station Mt. Octopus/Forks; and Grays Harbor Emergency Management.

In the category of Non-Profit Agency Efforts, the winner was Kitsap County Day of Caring, Kitsap County Emergency Management and Kitsap County United Way.

### ComCARE Alliance to help forge E911 vision for future

Washington state leaders from the telephone industry, hospitals, emergency medical services, state and local transportation departments, police/fire and the private sector are invited to share in the State E911 vision for Washington for an integrated E911, EMS and traffic management communications system.

With the State E911 Program as sponsor, the ComCARE Alliance will host two half-day seminars in Seattle this fall. The seminars will bring together industry leaders to plan for and implement leading-edge technologies that will revolutionize emergency response.

Presenters will include Marsha Scherr, executive director, ComCARE Alliance, and David Aylward, ComCARE founder and president of National Strategies, Inc.

For more information, contact Bob Oenning at 253-512-7011 or Kurt Hardin at 253-512-7014.

### Ocean Shores site of E911 Coordinator Forum

The Grays Harbor County E911 Program will host the next E911 County Coordinator Forum in Ocean Shores, Sept. 13-14, 2001. The State E911 Program sponsors quarterly forums for coordinators to share information on 9-1-1 issues.

Forum topics will include:

- An overview of the state's Emergency Alert System (EAS) with the participation of the 9-1-1 industry.
- Roles and responsibilities of jurisdictions, wireless providers and the Local Exchange Carrier (LEC) from the perspective of an Independent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC).
- A presentation on *Operation Lifesaver*, a nationwide program promoting railroad safety.
- A focus on railroad operations in Washington, and issues and remedies in coordinating with emergency service 9-1-1 personnel.
- Addressing the legalities of emergency services and railroads.
- *9-1-1 Network Elements 101*—which describes the components of a typical 9-1-1 system with a glossary of telephone industry terms. (In addition to 9-1-1 coordinators, this presentation will benefit anyone who reports telephone company problems or pays telephone company bills.)

For more information, contact Kurt Hardin at 253-512-7014.

### 9-1-1 calls in the wild

For people who carry a wireless phone for emergency use when boating or while out in the wilderness, two new informational brochures are available to assist them in placing calls to 9-1-1. The State E911 Program developed the publications specifically for boaters and people in the wilderness and outdoor recreational areas.

These brochures may be ordered by contacting local 9-1-1 coordinators. For more information, contact Kurt Hardin at 253-512-7014.

## Farm disaster declared

Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman in late August designated Benton, Grant and Yakima counties as agricultural disaster areas due to severe storm damage in early June.

Veneman's decision also named Adams, Douglas, Franklin, King, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pierce, Skamania, and Walla Walla as contiguous disaster counties.

The disaster designation will enable the Farm Service Agency to offer low-interest loans to farmers and ranchers in the declared and contiguous counties for livestock assistance and farm property losses.

The U.S. Small Business Administration also could offer economic injury loans to farmers and ranchers in declared and contiguous counties.

The USDA said it was unable to accurately assess storm-caused production losses for the current crop year in Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, King, Klickitat, Pierce, and Walla Walla counties. A decision on those counties will be deferred until the loss information becomes available for the current crop year.

On July 13, Gov. Gary Locke also asked Veneman for a farm disaster designation for Asotin, Yakima, Klickitat, Lincoln, Chelan and Stevens counties because of drought, storm and spring freeze impacts. On Aug. 10, Locke added Benton and Douglas counties to the request. And, back to July 31, the governor's office allocated an additional \$500,000 to aid farmworker families in the 13 counties that were part of Locke's agricultural storm damage disaster request.

The money, which was transferred from the Washington Military Department's disaster response account to the Office of Community Development, will be distributed through community action agencies to help families affected by crop losses to meet basic needs such as emergency medical and dental services, food, shelter and transportation.

## Governor continues energy supply alert

Washington's energy supply alert has been extended to Oct. 22. Gov. Gary Locke, who first declared the alert on Jan. 26, renewed the measure for the third time on Aug. 17. The governor's alert: 1) allows utilities to install temporary generators to provide more power while imposing strict environmental and mitigation requirements; 2) requires state and local governments to cut electricity and natural gas consumption by 10 percent; and 3) allows the city of Tacoma to burn alternative fuels at its steam plant while protecting air quality.

## Nisqually earthquake recovery update

Individual assistance recovery programs for the Feb. 28 Nisqually Earthquake continued to set new records as final individual registrations were processed through the summer.

Total disaster aid registrations reached 41,268 as of Aug. 30. The number was more than the combined total of all other previous Washington disasters.

Other recovery highlights as of Aug. 30 for the 22 declared counties and 25 Tribal Nations within the declared disaster area were:

- Since the March 1 Presidential declaration, \$50.09 million in aid has been approved for temporary disaster housing assistance and minimal repair grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Inspectors have completed 38,854 damage verifications in the declared counties.
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved \$79.6 million in low-interest loans to homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes.
- The Individual and Family Grant program has approved \$3.09 million for residents affected by the earthquake. Grants are to assist with serious disaster-related needs and necessary expenses not covered by insurance or other disaster programs.

The following list outlines by county the total number of applicants and assistance as of Aug. 28 for temporary disaster rental assistance, minimal repair grants and low-interest disaster loans:

<i>County</i>	<i>Registrations</i>	<i>Approved Temporary Housing Assistance</i>	<i>SBA Approved Disaster Loans</i>
Benton	47	\$ 62,466	\$ 40,500
Chelan	115	\$ 137,077	\$ 83,200
Clallam	131	\$ 128,510	\$ 73,800
Clark	198	\$ 214,552	\$ 206,800
Cowlitz	151	\$ 295,195	\$ 321,500
Grays Harbor	2,083	\$ 3,618,648	\$ 2,255,500
Island	117	\$ 135,899	\$ 171,600
Jefferson	99	\$ 118,431	\$ 117,000
King	16,257	\$19,136,179	\$39,611,800
Kitsap	2,656	\$ 3,167,690	\$ 4,699,700
Kittitas	110	\$ 119,038	\$ 74,800
Lewis	1,224	\$ 1,836,021	\$ 2,157,800
Mason	798	\$ 1,073,673	\$ 1,152,100
Pacific	233	\$ 459,069	\$ 235,400
Pierce	8,455	\$11,521,285	\$11,812,400
Skagit	402	\$ 467,973	\$ 867,700
Skamania	7	\$ 8,859	\$ 3,000
Snohomish	1,528	\$ 1,246,541	\$ 1,789,200
Thurston	5,412	\$ 5,746,740	\$13,203,700
Wahkiakum	32	\$ 57,026	\$ 53,700
Whatcom	709	\$ 761,749	\$ 441,500
Yakima	457	\$ 611,195	\$ 315,300

## Gov. Locke names new State Patrol chief

Ronal E. Serpas, assistant superintendent of police and chief of operations for the New Orleans Police Department since 1996, became the chief of the Washington State Patrol Aug. 1.

Gov. Gary Locke appointed Serpas to the post July 19 based on the recommendation of three-member search committee. A 21-year veteran of the New Orleans Police Department, Serpas served as the department's patrol supervisor, platoon commander and budget supervisor and had commanded the scientific investigations division and units of special operations, special weapons and tactics, and budget.

Serpas succeeds Annette Sandberg, who resigned Feb. 5 as WSP chief after six years of service.

## CSEPP honors DeBow

Steve DeBow, program manager of the Emergency Management Division's Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP), was honored by the national CSEPP program for more than a decade of contributions at the program's local, state and national levels. DeBow, who joined EMD's CSEPP program in 1990, received the award July 25 at CSEPP's national conference in Portland, Oregon.

## State personnel

**Betty Kobe** joined the Emergency Management Division (EMD) July 23 as a budget program specialist. She previously worked at the state Department of Labor and Industries.

**Jerald Compton** started July 30 as a secretary senior in the Director's Office. He came to EMD from the state Office of Trade and Economic Development.

**Colleen Roberts** became EMD's newest State Emergency Operations Officer on Aug. 16. A Certified Emergency Manager, she worked as a temporary public information officer at EMD since April, and previously served in overseas deployments of the U.S. Army and Washington Army National Guard.

**Chris Ohlsen** joined EMD in mid-August as the Fire Mobilization Program Manager in the Programs Unit. She has an extensive background in the fire service and most recently comes to us from the Tumwater Fire Department. Within two days of being hired she was sent to the Area Fire Command headquarters to act as the EMD Liaison. She will work out of the Spokane Emergency Management Office.

**Michelle Sabin** joined EMD in August as the Tsunami/Hazmat/SERC Program Assistant. Previously she worked as a administrative assistant in the Rules, Contracts and Public Disclosure Section of the state Dept. of Corrections.

## Sept. 11 is 9-1-1 Day

Gov. Gary Locke officially proclaims Sept. 11 as 9-1-1 Day, a day set aside to recognize the importance of 9-1-1 service to our health and safety, and a day to offer our gratitude to the thousands of public safety providers on whom we rely every day. Public safety personnel deserve our recognition for thousands of jobs well done each year. 9-1-1 Day also recognizes that Washington residents may now access Enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone systems statewide.

Don't let Sept. 11 pass without acknowledging the hard work and dedication of your local 9-1-1 telecommunicators.

### *Emergency Responder*

July-August 2001. Published by the Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department.

**Major General Timothy J. Lowenberg,**  
The Adjutant General

**Glen Woodbury,** Director

**Rob Harper, Mark Clemens, Penelope Cassidy, Colleen Roberts—editors**

WMD is an equal opportunity employer. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, persons of disability, persons over 40 years of age, and disabled and Vietnam-era veterans are encouraged to apply for all positions. The *Emergency Responder* is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information, call Rob Harper at (800) 562-6108, ext. 7005; (253) 512-7298 TDD; or email him at <r.harper@emd.wa.gov>.



Washington Military Department  
Emergency Management Division  
Camp Murray, WA 98430-5122

FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Washington State  
Department of Printing

The Washington Emergency Management Division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, which is at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.